



USS LAKE ERIE

"The People's Ship"
Family & Friends Newsletter

USS LAKE ERIE (CG 70) FPO AP 96671
Careline: 808 539 3370

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From the Commanding Officer...

In late February, I had a week most Commanding Officers dream about. While underway for Flight Test Mission 04-1, LAKE ERIE received word that we had won the Type Commander's Battle Efficiency Award and the CAPT Edward F. Ney Award. Recognition like this is significant and speaks to the pride and professionalism of each LAKE ERIE sailor. That was not all though. On Thursday, 24 February, LAKE ERIE made history by destroying a ballistic missile in outer space with our new AEGIS Baseline 3.0 Computer Program and a Standard Missile 3. This new technology performed as designed but more importantly your crew conducted their assigned roles with flawless precision. I felt a tremendous feeling of pride as I watched them perform. LAKE ERIE is a ship loaded with spectacular technology. However, it would not amount to anything without the dedication and effort of the crew. They truly are the most important weapon system on board this magnificent ship.

I wish a Happy Holiday to each LAKE ERIE family and thank you all for your continued love and support.

Mahalo, Capt Joe Horn



XO's NOTES



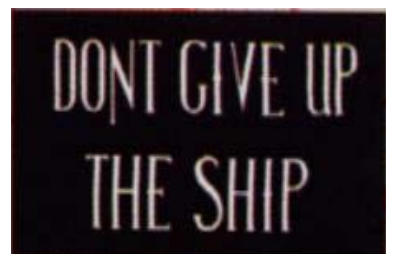
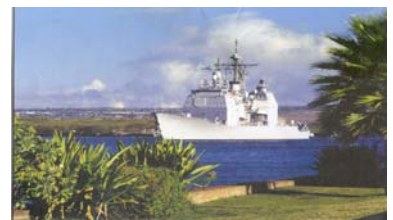
LAKE ERIE Sailors continue to professionally distinguish themselves – the 2004 Battle Efficiency Award; the 2004 NEY Award and successful Ballistic Missile Defense testing. On every front, LAKE ERIE sailors have met the challenges head on and exceeded the standards.

As we enter our third week in drydock, we are starting to gear up for the Initial Assessment which will eventually lead into Underway Demonstration.

These are shipwide inspections with heavy emphasis on Engineering and Damage Control Procedures/Drills. Your LAKE ERIE sailor will again be putting their nose to the grindstone as we look to complete the rest of our tailored shipwide training syllabus. I can assure you that we will attack each of the upcoming milestones with the same aggressiveness and positive attitude in an effort to maintain the high standards of excellence your sailor has already set.

To our families and friends, as always, *mahalo* for your support.

DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP -- LCDR Neil Funtanilla





CMC's Comments

Just a few short months into this new year, the crew of USS LAKE ERIE continues to prove their honor, courage and commitment, racking up an impressive collection of honors and awards. But where would they be without their friends and families and those who support them. To that end, I would like to take a moment and offer my sincere thanks to our Ohana Group and our MWR organization on board. In just the last few weeks, MWR provided a special night for all the crew at the Spring Fling event held on March 17th at the Hale Koa in Waikiki. On Easter, many of the families of the sailors of USS LAKE ERIE gathered for an enjoyable afternoon including a successful Easter Egg Hunt for the kids sponsored by the Ohana. These two events are

representative of the commitment these volunteers show to support not only the crew but their families as well. So it is with some sadness we bid farewell to Candice Mersberg as she steps down from being the Ohana Group President. Thanks, Candice, for all your energy and efforts in supporting the Sailors and families.

And now, on to the future! The crew continues to work hard during the heavy workload of a compressed training cycle. A special congratulations to our 28 First Class Petty Officers eligible for Chief Petty Officer.... GOOD LUCK to all!!!

DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!! CMC Jeff Nickerson

LAKE ERIE Takes Home Battle E Award

USS LAKE ERIE is the winner of the Battle E for Commander Naval Surface Group, Middle Pacific. The officers and crew have once again proven themselves to be superior performers. The Command Excellence awards are given on the basis of not just proficiency, but excellence in the performance of that area of responsibility which contributes to the ship's ability to accomplish her mission. The Command Excellence Awards given to LAKE ERIE are: the Black **E**, the Red **E**, the Blue **E** and the Yellow **E**.

The Black E is the Maritime Warfare (Power Projection/Sea Control) Excellence Award and the objective is to recognize sustained superior performance and readiness to conduct a ship's prescribed military missions.



The Red E is the Engineering/ Survivability Excellence Award and is given to recognize sustained superior performance in shipboard evolutions relating to main propulsion and damage control.

The Blue E is the Logistics Management Excellence Award. This award recognizes excellence in management of material, financial, and personnel resources. This is LAKE ERIE's 11th consecutive Logistics Management Excellence Award and speaks to Supply

Department's continued superb stewardship of financial resources and support to the crew.

Finally, the Yellow E is the TYCOM Ship Safety Excellence Award given to recognize excellence in the maintenance and execution of afloat safety and occupational health-related programs.

While any ship can earn excellence awards, the Battle E is the culmination of excellence in all mission areas and recognizes the best ship of a class in a squadron or group. It should be recognized that the Battle Efficiency Award is not a qualification award, but an award recognizing sustained superior performance in an operational environment.

This award carries special meaning this year as we not only excelled as the missile defense test ship but also a successfully completed an impressive four month WESTPAC Deployment.

USS Lake Erie Makes Naval History

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By Journalist 2nd Class Devin Wright,
Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Public
Affairs

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (NNS)
-- The guided-missile cruiser USS
Lake Erie (CG 70) returned to
Pearl Harbor on Feb. 25 after
participating in the latest Missile
Defense Agency (MDA) test of
the AEGIS Ballistic Missile
Defense (BMD) Program and the
Standard Missile 3 (SM-3).



The latest program test was
designed to evaluate the
operationally configured SM-3
and its ability to intercept and
destroy short- to medium-range
ballistic missiles.

The target missile was shot from
the Pacific Missile Range Facility
on Kauai. At 11:03 a.m., one
minute later, Lake Erie launched
the SM-3 from its patrol area
located more than 100 miles from
Kauai. The intercept was achieved
about two minutes after the SM-3
was launched.

"We knew the missile was going to
be launched," said Lt. Cmdr. Paul
Wingart, combat systems officer,
USS Lake Erie. "We just didn't
know when. When we detected the
missile, we tracked it, then launched
the interceptor and were
successful," said Wingart.



Chief Fire Controlman Technician
(SW) Richard Thompson of USS
Lake Erie believes this missile
defense program is a milestone for
the entire Navy.

"Fortunately, we have been
designated as the MDA test ship,"
said Thompson. "But this intercept
is not only important to the Lake
Erie, but to the entire United States
Navy. Lake Erie is on the cutting
edge. We get to test all the systems
and help develop the tactics that the
entire Navy is going to use once this
becomes an operational system. It
feels great to be a part of something
that will not only help defend the
citizens of the United States, but our
allies as well," Thompson said.

Fire Controlman 2nd Class (SW)
Dennis Nystrom of USS Lake Erie

was the first crew member to spot
the ballistic missile on the ship's
SPY-1B radar.

"I spotted the missile on our radar
and called away the track number,"
said Nystrom. "That started
everything in motion. We were all

really anxious just
before the captain
gave us permission
to launch the SM-3.
When we hit the
ballistic missile, it
was a great feeling.
We were all
jumping for joy.
You know when
you put two or
three months of
work into a project
whose end result is

over in just a matter of seconds, it's
an adrenaline rush," Nystrom said.

While the AEGIS weapons system,
the foundation of the ballistic missile
defense, is currently installed on 68
Navy ships, Lake Erie is the only
Navy ship that has intercepted a
ballistic missile.



INSIDE THE HULL

A Glimpse at the sailors of USS Lake Erie

LAKE ERIE started the New Year off with a bang, earning the right to fly a broomstick from the yardarm to symbolize a “clean sweep” of the Battle E award, Ney Award and successfully employment of a SM3 missile achieving a “skin to skin” hit on a ballistic missile during Flight Test Mission 04-1.

The Battle E award represents command excellence and is a team effort like no other. In earning the ship’s third Battle E, the crew demonstrated proficiency in Engineering, Supply, Maritime Warfare and Command and Control, among others.

After earning the 10th Blue E, Supply Department followed up by earning the Captain Edward F. Ney Award for excellence in food service. The award, given to only one ship in the fleet in each category, recognized LAKE ERIE’s food service department for its outstanding professionalism and commitment to high-quality meals.

Both awards were announced at the start of mission week for FTM 04-1 which ended successfully by downing their fifth ballistic missile in six attempts.

LAKE ERIE has made steady progress in the training cycle, finding time during mission week to run numerous engineering and damage control drills.

SM3 FLIES TOWARDS TARGET



LAKE ERIE WINS NEY!

LAKE ERIE’s Food Service Team was recently selected for the highest honor a Supply Department’s food service organization can be awarded -- the prestigious Captain Edward Ney Memorial Award. Judged in the Medium Afloat category, LAKE ERIE competed against 50 other ships during SMA/SMI for one of two nominations from Pacific Fleet. Also nominated were USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG54) of Pacific Fleet; USS McFaul (DDG 74) and USS Vicksburg (CG 69) of Atlantic Fleet.

According to CS1(SW) Abraham A. Seei, Leading Petty Officer, the award is an important acknowledgment of the hours of hard work Culinary Specialists (CS) and Food Service Attendants (FSA) perform on a daily basis. "It is an honor to win such a high award," he said. "It shows they acknowledge our hard work, determination, and expertise in the field."

Food Service Division with Chief Warrant Officer Leon A. Cole, the first CWO5 of the U.S Navy.



LAKE ERIE wins Ney (Cont'd)

Leading Chief Petty Officer, CSC(SW) Ferdinandnestor Q. Frando added that this recognition is significant not just for Food Service Division, but for the ship. "It is not just recognition for our division, it's for the crew as a whole," he said. "We received tremendous support from all departments especially Engineering and Medical personnel who put in a lot of efforts and long hours to as well. Without their support and satisfaction, we wouldn't have gone this far."

In a message released February 25, Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England thanked all winners for their efforts. England stated. "I commend all commands for their hard work and commitment to excellence."

Established in 1958 by the Secretary of the Navy and the International Food Service Executives Association (IFSEA) to improve and recognize the quality of food service in the Navy. Named in honor of Captain Edward F. Ney, Supply Corps, United States Navy.



CS3 Page and CSSR Russell giving a thumbs up during Ney.

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

Hello once again! Hope this newsletter reaches everyone in good spirits. There is so much to tell and not enough space to write it all down. But we will start with a hearty welcome aboard to OS1 Dimauro, OS2 Chamberlin, OS2 Gutierrez, OS2 Smoller, OS2 Stermer, OS2 Strapp, CTT3 Horner, OS3 Tucker, ITSN Brice, OSSN McGunnigle, OSSN Monahan, OSSN Johnson, OSSN Klippel, SN Hwang, SN Skipworth, SN Wallace, CTRSA Sprague, SN Brown and SN Gilberti.

With all these new people it's almost hard to say good-bye. But, s we have to say Farewell to CTT1 Sipes who leaves us for greener pastures at NSGA Denver; LTJG Spillane who is now stationed in Norfolk; IT1 Catlin (who turned his navy blues in for a pair of aloha shorts and sandals); LTJG Buford who is stationed aboard the USS Rushmore; and last but not least IT2 Stevens who is working as a civilian Information Systems Manager here locally in Hawaii.

Congrats to IT2 oops! Sorry.... IT1 Harness for being advanced to Petty Officer First Class. BM1 Smith, BM1 Wheller, CTO1 Goldbaugh, and CTT1 Sipes for making the FY06 E-7 selection board.

A special congratulation goes out to OS2 Gutierrez and his wife Rosalinda on the birth of their new baby boy Elian.

Stay tuned to more updates from Operations Department.

COMBAT SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT

The CS Department has been very busy this quarter; between Awards and Advancements, all divisions have had their share of success stories. Congratulations are to be extended to all of those First Class Petty Officers recently selected for review by the E-7 selection Board, GOOD LUCK to FC1 Allen, GM1 Bell, STG1 Chance, TM1 Crockett, and FC1 Davis.

Speaking of selection boards, very recently the results of the Limited Duty Officer selection board was released and our very own ET1 Weil was selected to receive a commission. ET1 Weil has been in the Naval service for 12 years and has served onboard USS Lake Erie since February of 2003. Petty Officer Weil applied for the LDO program as a step in following the footsteps of his family, both his father and father-in-law were U.S. Army Officers and he now will join the ranks of his family. ET1 plans to move back east with his Wife, Margaret, and two daughters; Elizabeth, 10 and Nina, 8.

As well as being selected for the LDO program, ET1 Weil was also selected as Lake Erie's Senior Sailor of the Year proceeded by the MIDPAC's Senior Sailor of the Year. Many congratulations go out to ET1 and his family for all of their many accomplishments, good luck in the future.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

***** MP Division *****

***** ER Division *****

***** EA Division *****

As a new era of engineers join the crew, the veterans are tasked with training ENFA Olsen, ENFA Reshaw, ENFA Orvis and ENFA Daniels. A-Gang's newest additions are without a traditional "A" School, and are sent out to the fleet for on the job training. But after a very successful deployment, Auxiliary Division has the knowledge and experience to train.

This division of Warriors could not attain success without it's fearless leaders and loyal maintenance men. ENC (SW) Rivera's passion to train is what pushes everyone from the LPO to the very newest fireman to succeed. The leadership ENC (SW) Rivera imparts on every sailor is what every Navy Chief Petty Officer should strive for.



EN2 (SW) Hubert has taken charge of A-Gang, and works extremely hard. He has stepped up to the plate, and as a Second Class Petty Officer, he is leading a group of 12 sailors.

As A-Gang welcomes four new members, we also must say good-bye to FN Hamilton. FN Hamilton has been a tremendous asset to A-Gang, and he will not be easily replaced. We all wish him well in Lemoore, California.

Well the GS's are working hard to prepare for Engineering Initial Assessment (IA) shortly after completion of our drydock period. For many, this is the first time to see the ship's propellers. It is a unique experience.



This quarter we had 2 new additions to our engineering family. GSM2(SW) Twidwell and GSMFN Debeauville both had sons. Congratulations.

***** EM Division *****

EM Division might be missing a Chief Petty Officer, but they certainly aren't lacking direction. Along with their new division officer ENS Samuelson, EM1 Phipps and EM2 Deer have both seamlessly stepped up to fill leadership positions within their shop. From hauling out the Christmas lights for Command functions to helping fellow crew members check out tools for maintenance and repairs, both petty officers are ensuring Electrical Safety and stable power are a priority on board LAKE ERIE. As the new ELO, ENS Samuelson has adopted a new workout regimen, focusing on weightlifting and eating massive amounts of protein to facilitate his new role as "The Enforcer" of the Electrical Safety program. Better double check your laptop cord – Safety First LAKE ERIE!

The DCs and HTs of Repair Division are also ramping up for IA. Here in R Division, we are extremely happy to welcome several new members to the Engineering family. MR1(SW) Albert Hale made the move down H3 from Kaneohe to Pearl Harbor. If you can't find him behind the lathe or fixing doorknobs, he's probably on a flight home to fix more doorknobs at his new residence on the Big Island of Hawaii. HT2 Eric Boggs is new to both the ship and sea duty, but has brought along his superior welding and brazing skills he developed at the Norfolk Intermediate Maintenance Facility.

On the DC side of the shop, DC2(SW) Sheldon Kapua is a welcome addition to the ER04 workcenter. DC2 Kapua has worked in Guam on submarine tenders, a minesweeper out of Bahrain and is looking forward to spending time with his family in Waianae after being forward deployed for the past six years. DC2 (SW) Jerry Pfefferkorn might look familiar to some of the older salts on board LAKE ERIE. DC2 Pfefferkorn returned in January and is helping shoulder some of the ER09 burden. DC3 Keith Hoffman reported in January from decommissioning the SPRUANCE and his abundant enthusiasm made an immediate impact in Repair Locker 3 as team leader.

And just when you think there isn't another red ball cap on the ship to be found, please take a second to say Aloha to our new Damage Control Assistant, LTJG Chris Gahl. LTJG Gahl comes to R Div from serving on board the PAUL HAMILTON as the Communications Officer, and is equally ready to fight some fires and hit some homers on the ENG softball team.

NAV/ADMIN DEPARTMENT

A lot has happened since our last edition of the newsletter. For many, it was a sense of pride after returning from their first deployment with their Sea Service Deployment ribbon in hand, for others it was just another mark on the decorated chest of a salty sailor. And for others deployment allowed us to excel at our job, step us as leaders and be further rewarded.



YN2 Manu busy in the Ship's Office

Many a long night was spent by YN2(SW) Harry Manu who persevered through the constantly changing daily and long range schedule, constant revisions to the Plan of the Day as well as altering orders and setting up emergency leave flights for shipmates in need. YN2 Manu was the primary night owl, working behind the scenes after his other ships office counterparts had turned in for the night, ensuring 24 hour manning of the ships office for administrative taskings, which needed to be handled quickly and precisely. In addition, Petty Officer Manu, spent many hours in the Pilothouse as bridge phone talker for the seemingly unending hours of flight operations. For all his hard work YN2(SW) Manu was awarded the Navy and Marine

Corps Achievement Medal. Congratulations, shipmate!

On the Navigation side of the house, deployment provided an extremely formidable opponent filled with numerous short notice transits, an endless supply of charts and navigation briefs needing to be prepared, and about 29,000 miles of open ocean to cover. One man was leading through it all, balancing manpower between 4 watch sections, maintaining navigation equipment and publication readiness and correcting almost 150 charts, many on short notice which ensure the safe navigation of the ship. For his efforts on deployment, QM2(SW) Christensen was also awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

The department's highest achiever by far was HM3(SW) D'agostino who is the proud recipient of a second chevron and now known as HM2. He was also the recipient of Junior Sailor of the Quarter, 4th Quarter for both Lake Erie and COMNAVSURFGRU MIDPAC which lead to his selection as LAKE ERIE and COMNAVSURFGRU MIDPAC



HM2 D'agostino hard at work in the Main Battle Dressing Station

Junior Sailor of the Year.

Petty Officer D'agostino, while serving as work center supervisor, also found time to manage the health and well being of over 350 sailors and 40 officers, with numerous immunizations drives, a stellar hearing conservation program, and most importantly for the less than salty sailors and endless supply of "pink pills" to keep them from being overcome by the less than friendly seas. For his accomplishments, Petty Officer D'agostino was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. Congratulations, Doc on all your accomplishments.

St Patty's Day Party 17 March -- Hale Koa Hotel

